

Ye Olde West

2nd Edition

by Jimmy B

**A game of modern myths
and legends from the Old West**

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1 Prologue

A man in a neat grey suit and bowler hat stood in the middle of the single dusty road that ran through the town. Although town was possibly too strong a word, it had a tavern, but that meant nothing, and a bank, which again was fairly meaningless, they seemed to crop up out of nowhere these days. It was all in all quite distressing, he had not seen a real city since he came to the west to visit his sister, several years hence.

“Well my dear fellow, I believe that we have come to a stalemate here.” The suited man’s voice was prim and cultured.

“I do believe that we have sir, would you be so kind as to prime your pistol? The hour of noon is nearly upon us.” The man who answered him was certainly not his equal in culture or civility, but was making an effort all the same, his gruff tones forced into a comical mimicry of Eton English.

“You are firmly entrenched upon this unpleasant course of action then?”

“Oh look, that’s it, I’ve had enough. Your faked English nobility lark was fun at first, and I’ll admit it leant credibility to your legend, but I’m not going to play along any more, you understand?” The gruff tones gave in, grasping desperately at their more familiar dialect.

“Well certainly. Shall we draw when this coin hits the floor?” From somewhere inside his waistcoat the suited man had produced a large silvery coin.

His opponent frowned slightly. “How do I know you won’t draw before then?”

“You’d doubt the word of an English gentleman? For I do give you my word sir, I swear upon my homeland’s sovereignty.”

“Very well then.” The coin was thrown up into the air, the eyes of the cowboy turned upwards to face it, narrowing slightly at the sun. The suited man’s hand blurred down to his hip and back.

There was a loud bang, and the cowboy fell forwards into the dust with a slow topple, starting with a buckling of the knees and working up. A neat hole was drilled in the very centre of his forehead, the exit wound slightly larger and messier at the back of his head, and a pool of garish red starting to spread around him.

“These Americans, so trusting.” The suited man blew across the muzzle of a long-barrelled six shooter, before slipping it back into a hip holster under his jacket, the line of the expensively tailored Oxford Street garment unruffled by the large metal mass concealed beneath it.

He turned to look at the tavern with a calculating eye, loud honky-tonk music drifted through the saloon doors. "I don't know how they fill these places, I really don't." He walked across the street, carefully stepping around the spreading pool of blood, and disappeared into the dimness and smoke through the doorway.

Ye Olde West is based on a mix of sources, essentially every cinematic action and cowboy film cliché is played out. Hundreds of John Wayne look-alikes roam the land, doling out justice according to their own morals, bandits are regularly repelled from trains and coaches carrying gold or expensive hostages. Somewhere out there three ex-Actors in bright black and white costumes strut across the landscape, cutting through great swathes of evil despite the odds.

This is the mindscape of the West. Australia had its Dreamtime, England had its legends of the fey, all legends which still echo in the minds of their nations, no matter how little the people of the nation may know it.

America had The West. Its greatest legends were born under the hot sun and over the dry dust of Hollywood film sets, but that does not matter, they are still legends, even if the sunset that the hero rides off into are fake, the people who watch those films believe, and they have carried the legends along with them. Everyone from Wyatt Earp to Calamity Jane, musicals, films, plays, stories, comics, everything that has gone together to make the romance and allure of the old west.

The Lone Ranger still rides Silver somewhere out in that limitless desert. There's even a giant mechanical spider

Snakeboot Robert came backwards through the saloon doors, his feet not even touching the ground until he landed, rolling over his own shoulder and coming up with a .45 revolver in his hand, gleaming silver and with the hammer already cocked. The doors swung back in, and then opened again as a massive man came out, his face flushed and furious, and frozen as he spotted the gun aimed directly for his face.

"Now, I suggest that you just go back in there, sit down, and finish your drink, and I'll be on my way, how does that sound?" Robert asked him. The man just grunted in response.

Robert's eyes flicked up towards his own head. "And if you could throw my hat out to me as well, I like that hat."

The hat was flung through the door, spinning past his ear and eventually being caught in Robert's spare hand. The massive man stood while Robert replaced his hat on his head, staring at the gun.

"Mighty big man hiding behind your gun, aren't you?" the huge man growled.

Robert grinned, still holding it. "Yeh, that I am. Think you're fast enough to get your own in time?"

The huge man's hand dropped down to his hip, and hovered for a moment, considering. Then he shook his head and turned back into the saloon.

wandering around somewhere out there, with the first two Secret Service agents standing on top. Dusty wanderers appear to save villages, and then to disappear once again into the sunset.

But it is modern day, the great wilderness is conquered. The wild indians and the cowboys are no more, they are no longer needed. Oh, children still play the games, people still watch the films, still tell the stories, but to all but a special few it is no longer real. Only those few who truly want those days back and know how to look for the world they desire, only those willing to sacrifice their past to the quest for it. And for those few, the West is patiently waiting.

After all, even legends need reinventing sometime, and it cannot be long before America needs its myths once again. There's going to be a new frontier opening up in a few decades, and the true frontiersmen were always those cowboys, and who is to say that they will not be again, when the frontier changes?

Runs With Buffalo crouched in the dry scrub by the road, waiting. With his head to the ground he could hear a faint sound, like distant thunder. He grinned slightly. "This'll be them he muttered to himself", checking that his rifle was loaded, and his knife was loose in its sheath.

A few minutes later the first of the horses came into view. "That's them." He thought to himself, recognising the face of the first. Three horses went past at a slow pace, though slightly faster than could be comfortable for the woman with her wrists tied to the last horse. Runs With Buffalo's blood pounded in his ears as he pulled the rifle to his shoulder once they'd all gone past.

The rifle let out a deafening report, and the rider of the horse stiffened, and keeled off as the other two span round. A second shot finished off the second rider, and only the leader remained. He threw the rifle down, still secreted in the undergrowth as the leader dismounted and started to search the bushes.

Eventually he got to within about three feet of Runs with Buffalo, still not managing to spot the carefully concealed Indian. Fuelled by revenge and hatred he sprang from his covering, hearing a loud bang but not caring where the bullet went, and sank his knife deep into the cowboys throat.

As he stood over the body panting he felt a slight pain at the side of his chest and looked down. He grinned bitterly, well, it was done now at least, and he could go quietly. The bullet had pierced his chest, penetrating a lung. With his last breath he looked at the woman, smiling, and throwing his knife over to her before he fell.

2 The Setting

2.1 The World

The world of Ye Olde West should be familiar enough to anyone who has ever seen a western of any sort, whether something like “Maverick”, or “The Three Amigos”, to John Wayne’s “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance”. If you’ve not seen a western, read a cowboy book or comic, or even played cowboys and indians then I recommend that you do so before playing this game.

The world panders to every myth, cliché and stereotype about the West. It consists of a limitless expanse of desert, which no one will ever manage to cross, since it simply continues. It is populated by people in one-horse towns, little more than a sheriff’s office, saloon, bank and a few houses, and the obligatory general store. Other larger towns are more widely spaced, but again fit the cliché of

westerns, with banks, casinos, saloons, carriage posts, post offices, and if you are lucky a train station. All of these places are filled with floods of people, somewhere in the infinite desert there is every extra ever to appear in a film, every actor, every person, all slightly different and repeated many times, tailored to fit individual imaginations.

The characters will have come to Ye Olde West from Outside. Only a few each year are permitted to do this, and they make the new legends for the times coming. The world sacrifices a few of its bravest and best each year to the various Dreamlands, of which the west is one, and in return it gets a future, rather than stagnation. For whatever reason the characters have been chosen this time.

You can quite safely assume that any character accepted by Ye Olde West has watched westerns, and is probably one of those who has tried to live the life of a cowboy, although recently women have been accepted more and more often by

The two men rode into town, their horses exhausted and panting, and the riders not in much better state. The few town people who remained stared at them in despair, this was what remained of the posse that they had sent out after Grift. One of the men was the sheriff of the town, though he rode on his horse drooping and pale, his clothes stained by blood.

The other man rode tall, and was not known to the people. He did not appear to have any injuries, although a large bag hanging from his saddle was soaked with dried blood.

He swung down from his horse, and reached out to help the sheriff to the ground. The wounded man fell more than slid off his horse, lowered gently to the ground by the stranger. “Get someone to help him, now!” the stranger called.

He turned back to his horse and unfastened the bag from the saddle, tipping the contents to the floor. There, in the dust, was the bloodied and battered head of Grift, the outlaw.

the land. Nowadays cowgirls carving out their own legends are part of the natural order of things.

John Thorne smiled blankly at the other three around the table, his hand carefully placed face down. He slid a small wad of dollar bills into the large stack in the middle and looked around at the others, still with the same blank, meaningless smile.

They had seen enough, one by one they threw their hands down in disgust, abandoning their stakes in the game. Eventually everyone but him had folded, and he reached forwards to scoop the pot towards himself.

One of the men at the table reached out and grabbed his wrist, snarling. John looked up at him in surprise, his uncaring expression suddenly becoming irritated. "Something wrong?"

"You've been winning from us all night, what've you got up your sleeve?"

John laughed slightly, reached back, and flicked his hand over. The highest card was an eight, the lowest a two. No two cards were the same. He looked at the man again. "Absolutely nothing."

You are also much more likely to recover from wounds, especially if they have brought you close to the point of death and renewed your vigour to go out and avenge your near-death. However, while a broken leg does not technically injure you it is worth noting that it will still be incredibly painful, and you will not be able to walk until it is at least splinted.

Finally there is combat itself. Combat is cinematic. Bottles will break over people's heads, chairs will shatter against their backs, single punches will lay out some people, while others will manage long grappling sequences with the characters before one or the other is finally subdued. Explosions do not tear people to pieces, they hurl them through the air, and characters can usually survive even these, although extras may be killed.

Extras are easy enough to kill, but there are always more where they come from, and those killed often seem to have trouble staying dead once the legends are out of sight. An example is the besieged village, which always seems to reset to its besieged state. This can be done in two ways, one is to actually have the

As has been mentioned this is not based off a single particular theme or film, its from all of them. It is what the great unconscious mind of humanity still dreams of the west having been. In this world realism takes second place to drama, and heroism can be not only successful, but rewarded. Of course, villainy is the same.

Because the game is set in a dreamland certain things are different. Firstly ageing just does not happen. A character will never get any older, nor will they suffer from disease or accidental injury (through tripping over their own feet, jumping off a balcony does not count as accidental).

The second major difference is injury. Unlike in many games in Ye Olde West you do not have injury levels, it is simply that a blow either knocks you out, or not. The same goes for gunshots. Because of this you are much harder to kill than the 'extras' in the world, who will be affected as normal by such things.

extra return to life, the other is to simply have another extra step into the role. Either works, but either way the story must be maintained.

2.2 Sample places and characters

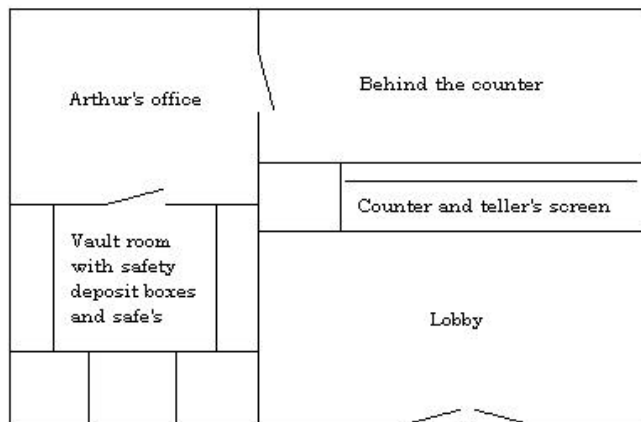
2.2.1 Desperation

Somewhere in the infinite desert there sits a particular town. It is the town of the lost, where the legends forgotten go to fade or die. The houses are empty, the sheriffs office is run down and battered, the bank is stacked with contracts and staffed by Arthur Christian. The only other sign of life beside the bank is in the saloon, where those who refused Arthur's terms sit and await the ultimate end, drinking their way into their doom.

Desperation is a town somewhere in the desert, which can only be found when all hope has been given up. No one lives in Desperation, and there is no such thing as night, or day, while you wait there. The only light ever seen is dusk.

The only people in Desperation are those whose legends are fading from the minds of those outside the Dreamscape. Feeling the slow grip of death upon them they are drawn to Desperation, whether to die there, or to somehow renew their legend.

2.2.1.1 The Bank and Arthur Christian



Arthur Christian's Bank is the main feature of Desperation, it is where dying legends may negotiate an extension of their life in exchange for something. Arthur's office is filled with blank contracts, they litter the desks and cover the floor. These are the contracts that are yet to be signed by people desperate to extend their legend.

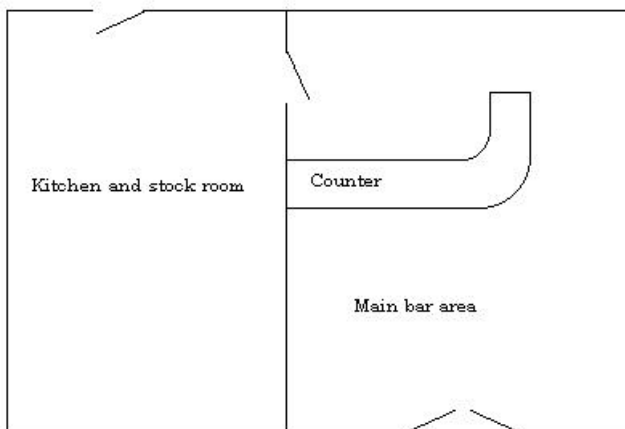
The Vault room safety deposit boxes and safe's are where the signed contracts rest. Only the most valuable contracts make it into the safe's, most are in the safety deposit boxes, still locked securely away.

The Lobby of the bank is where people usually ask Arthur for a loan, he will trade them extra lifespan secured against something. If they somehow manage to extend their life on their own (and very few do, once their legend is dying, the only way is to somehow make their legend more memorable) then they can claim back whatever they sold.

Arthur Christian himself does not have statistics, he simply is, in a similar way to a mountain or a spring. There is no way to kill him, and anyone trying will find themselves in serious difficulties. When negotiating a contract he will ask for a higher price depending on the legend, the highest price of all for the strongest legends. In exchange he will extend the myth for a time in the minds of the real world.

The catch is that once you have reached Desperation and spoken bluntly with Arthur you may never leave, for the people of the West are not permitted to find out that they are the memories of the real world, and so Arthur simply arranges for them not to be told. If you bring Desperation into your game be prepared to create new characters for your players.

2.2.1.2 The Last Chance Saloon



When someone gets to Desperation they are often drawn immediately to the bank, but some will still visit the saloon. This is their last chance to leave Desperation, and all in the saloon will suggest that they do. The staff are simply extras, there is nothing special about them.

Sitting at the tables and bar are the people who have taken out a 'loan' from Arthur, and those who refused his terms. All are desperate, unable to leave the town. Should they try then they find themselves simply doubling back in the desert. None of them will speak bluntly about what Arthur does, and they will all try to get the newcomers to leave town, through whatever methods they can.

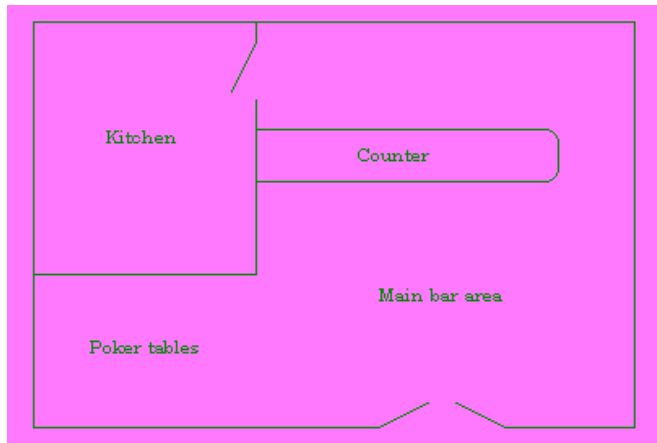
2.2.2 Desolation

In the middle of a bare open plain there lurks a town, broken-backed and mortally wounded, in the last phases of its decay. The town is called Desolation, with the houses open and burned and the single saloon selling only the crudest of liquors. The bank is empty but for a small handful of dollars. Each day the bandit lords of this area ride into the town to claim everything the people may have gathered as their 'tithe'. Through this the town has gradually decayed to its current, impoverished state.

Desolation is a town truly in need of help, it is a broken shell of its former state, the remains of rich houses simply left to rot after their burning. The saloon is the only part of the town showing signs of life, and even then they are subdued. Over its door hang the remains of a sign, unreadable through time and fire.

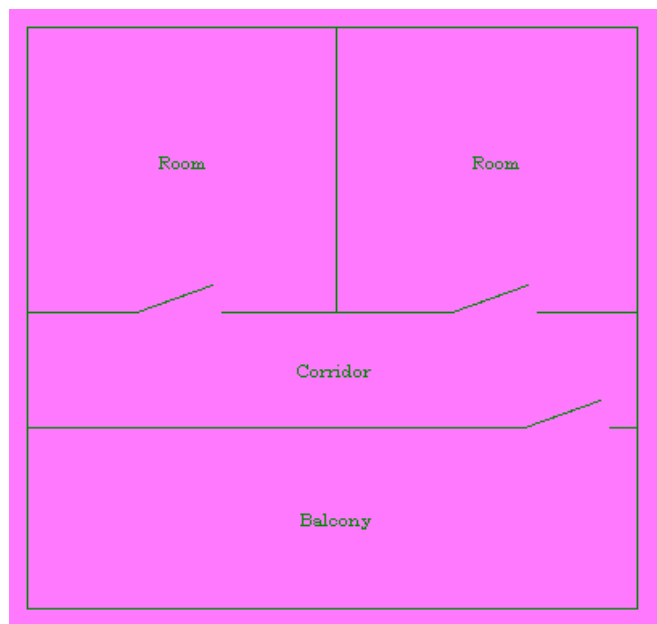
Bullet holes and the marks of explosions and fire pepper every visible surface. It was built as a besieged town.

2.2.2.1 Desolation's Saloon



Despite its appearance, and even despite the basic and crude level of its provisions, the saloon is actually of quite good quality. The two drinks it offers are water and a home-brewed and distilled cactus liquor, which while not particularly stunning in its flavour, is at least strong. The food on the other hand is heavy and filling, but certainly not tasty. The usual dish is some form of stew,

occasionally with some meat, ranging from meat of desert creatures such as vultures and coyotes to horse-meat from the horses of travellers and 'heroes' who fail to win against the bandits.



The saloon is where most of the people of the town spend their time. Where their money comes from is difficult to say, but they always seem to have enough to eat, drink and play poker. The same applies to the food and drink, where it comes from is difficult to say, but it does appear, and does get sold. The owner of the saloon is also the beauty of the town, and often the one that the bandits kidnap whenever heroes turn up. She is in fact married, but her husband generally does not leave the kitchen.

There is a second floor to the saloon, where travellers may stay for a few dollars in a private room. The rooms are nothing special, but have a bed, cupboard, and water pitcher. To get to the second floor you have to climb a set of stairs out front of the saloon which lead up to the balcony. The balcony itself is open, with no railings in most parts due to past damage.

Belle – owner of the Desolation Saloon

Grit 2
Fast 4
Sharp 2
Patter 4

Equipment

- ✂* A fine cream dress, clean except for when she is kidnapped, when it always manages to rip and become dirty
- ✂* Small derringer hidden in her garter, the bandits never, ever find this when she is kidnapped, since they have generally forgotten the previous time

Appearance

Absolutely stunning, pale skinned, perfectly proportioned. Her hair is fine, long and black, braided down her back in a single long plait which reaches to her waist. Her waist is narrow, and her bosom is full.

Experience worth 1

George – Belle’s wife

Grit 4
Fast 2
Sharp 2
Patter 1

Equipment

- ✂* Plain cotton suit
- ✂* Shotgun kept behind the kitchen door
- ✂* Meat cleaver

Appearance

George is a large man, not exactly fat, simply big. He is pleasant enough but dislikes meeting too many people and so generally leaves the bar work to his wife, staying in the kitchen himself. The one time he might come out is when his wife has been kidnapped and someone has to run the bar, or when he tries to stand up to the bandits and generally is shot. As with so many extras, once the legends have left he forgets his ‘death’.

Experience worth 1

2.2.3 Besieged town

This is a town repeated thousands of time across the West, one of the most well known of stereotypes from westerns. The town is usually fairly small and isolated, will almost always have a church (often peppered with bullet holes and sometimes already destroyed). As for saloons or banks it is up to the Sheriff, but there will never be a law office, at least not one standing.

The town is under siege by a bandit gang of some kind. The inhabitants will be poor, but offer what little they have in exchange for help. Note that even if the bandits are completely destroyed, they will return after the heroes leave.

2.2.3.1 Bandit

Grit	4
Fast	5
Sharp	3
Patter	3

Equipment

- ~~☞~~ Some form of rifle or shotgun
- ~~☞~~ Some kind of pistol
- ~~☞~~ Horse
- ~~☞~~ Full set of clothes
- ~~☞~~ Handful of money
- ~~☞~~ Several sticks of dynamite
- ~~☞~~ Several cigars
- ~~☞~~ Matches
- ~~☞~~ Bottle of tequila or whiskey

Appearance

Very much a thuggish appearance, dressed in patched clothes, and carrying several weapons. They will usually smell of alcohol, and appear to be tougher than the characters.

Experience worth 2

2.2.3.2 Bandit leader

Grit	4/2
Fast	5/2
Sharp	4/1
Patter	4/1

Equipment

- ~~☞~~ Some form of rifle or shotgun
- ~~☞~~ Matched pair of pistols
- ~~☞~~ Bullet bandoleer
- ~~☞~~ Large amount of paper money
- ~~☞~~ Several cigars
- ~~☞~~ Matches
- ~~☞~~ Bottle of tequila or whiskey

Appearance

The biggest, toughest, loudest, most unpleasant of the gang. He will usually be the one who kidnaps the hostage.

Experience worth 3

2.2.3.3 Town inhabitant

Grit	2
Fast	3
Sharp	2
Patter	3

Equipment

☞ Very little of anything

Appearance

Downtrodden and defeated, humble, honest and hardworking.

Experience worth 1

2.2.4 Mugger's Gorge

This is a large gorge somewhere in the desert (or rather in several places), inhabited by a huge number of outlaws. Anyone riding near that area will be attacked for whatever they might be worth. If they manage to kill a fair number of the bandits they attack will become more furious up until a point, and then the bandits will try to negotiate a surrender. The entire encounter should not be worth more than about two or three experience points per character, possibly four if they role-play exceptionally well.

2.2.5 Indian Camp

The traditional American Indian encampment from just about any western that involves them. Essentially a collection of colourful tepees arranged around campfires, with a horse post near some of the tents.

2.2.5.1 Indian warrior

Grit	5
Fast	4
Sharp	3
Patter	3

Equipment

☞ Loincloth

☞ Bow and arrows or long rifle

☞ Hunting knife

Appearance

Traditional red-skin, sometimes with war paint, others without. For some reason their skin always seems to shine as though oiled, and their hair is always perfectly styled and washed.

Experience worth 2

2.2.5.2 Squaw

Grit 2
Fast 3
Sharp 3
Patter 2

Equipment

✂ Short, simple dress
✂ Utility knife
✂ Headband

Appearance

The standard red-skin squaw from just about any film. Always young, always pretty, their hair is always perfectly styled in long braids down their backs, usually with feathers tied in at the end.

Experience worth 1

2.2.6 Eagleton

Eagleton sprawled out beneath the three riders looking down upon it, a bustling town of miners, merchants, gamblers, and anything else they could desire after their long days and nights crossing the desert.

It was a shame that they did not have enough money for even the worst room in town between the three of them.

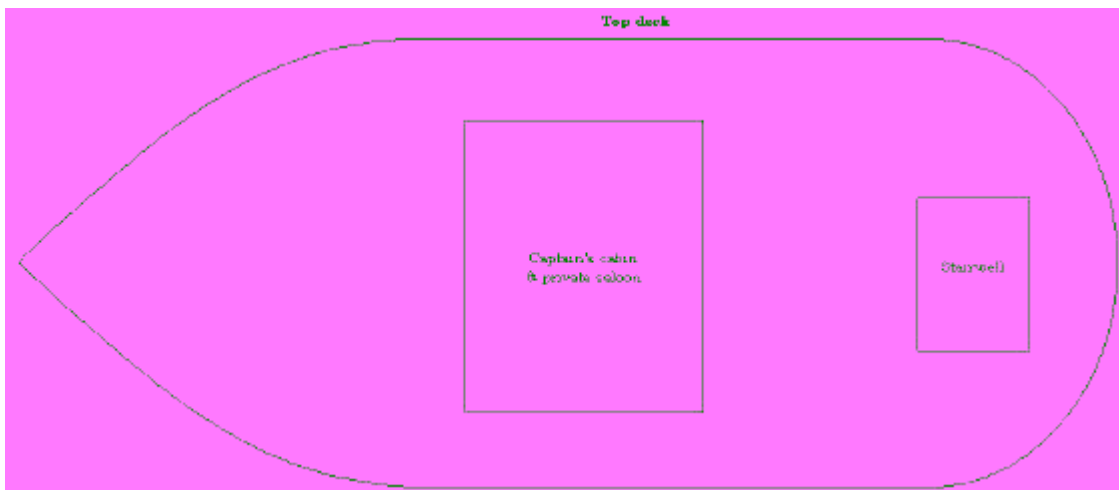
Eagleton is one of the successful towns in the West, a station runs through it, the rails stretching off into the distance and the trains going...somewhere. Where they go is up to the Sheriff. The town itself bustles, the main street filled with people, stage coaches and horses moving back and forth. Small children offer to hold horses for a dollar.

Just because Eagleton is successful does not mean it is pleasant though. For those who live there life is not too bad, but for travellers they will find that everything is incredibly expensive, and if you were not born in the town you will have difficulty finding a job.

There is also a river running through the town, carrying boats and barges up and downstream. The most famous of these barges never moves, known as the Floating Palace it sits, anchored, in the centre of the river. This is the town's largest casino and luxury accommodation, although the owner is slightly unethical.

While part of the reason for the town's prosperity is the huge number of casinos, ranging from the luxury and style of the Floating Palace to the somewhat less respectable Dead End Saloon and Dervish's, the larger part is due to something else. Here the gold rush was successful, the mountains behind the town are packed with thick veins of gold, which makes its way down into the town as miners return from their claims with bags of gold dust, and sometimes even nuggets, looking for a good time.

2.2.6.1 The Floating Palace



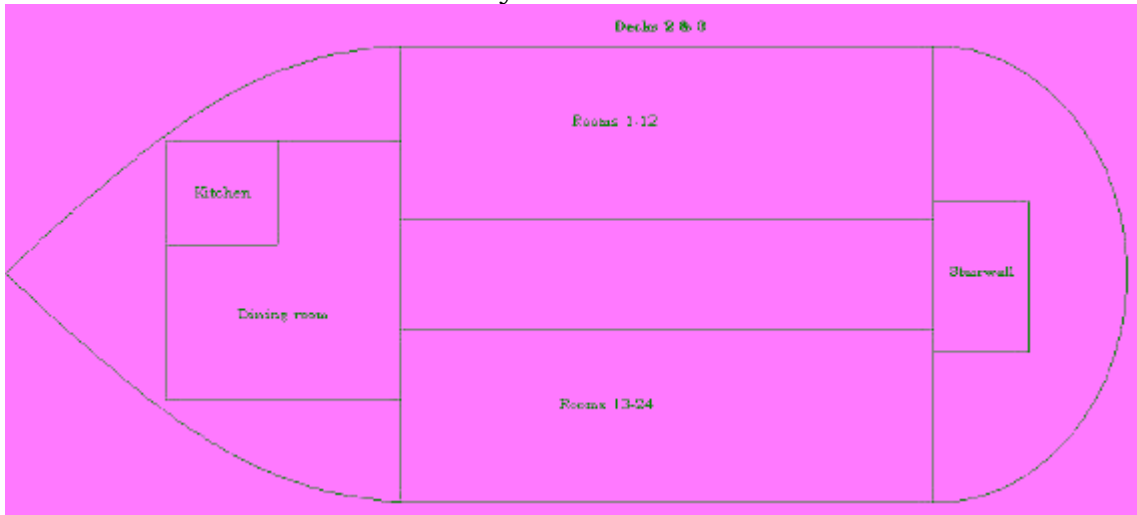
The most luxurious casino, saloon and hotel available in Eagleton. The top deck is simply plain decking, except for the Captain's cabin and the stairwell leading down. Between the cabin and the stairwell an upper terrace sits, covered with canvas. The Captain's cabin is where the high-stake, no-limit games of poker are played, any players must have at least \$10 000 to sit in on the game. All of the games here are dealt personally by Captain Johns, and he will match any stake someone cares to place.

The saloon in the Captain's cabin is free to anyone playing there, although spectators have to pay as normal. The Captain will quite happily play any game, not just poker.

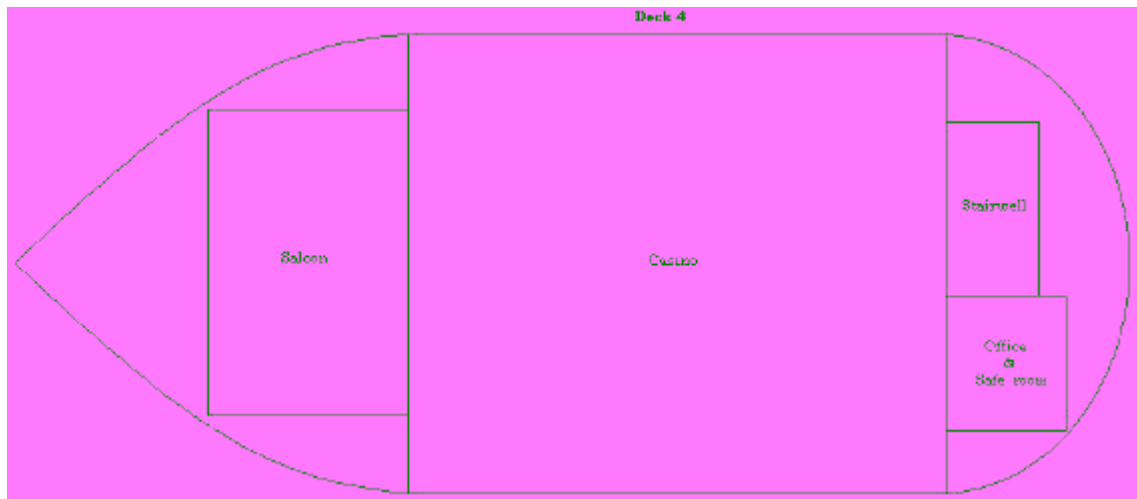
The first two decks down from the top deck are both accommodation, with 24 rooms on each and a dining room famed across the desert for its food. The kitchen actually prides itself on its chef's inventiveness, and his ability to cook gourmet food from anything to hand. The rooms are deluxe, deep-pile carpet, baths with hot running water, food delivered to the rooms, and even free drinks at the casino saloon.

Finally there is the last deck, this is the deck where the casino itself rests. Any players are welcome at the casino. For anyone at one of the tables drinks are free, and brought to the table. Just about any game you could desire is played somewhere in here, there are even separate card tables for games among players without the house involved except for a \$10 table fee.

One thing not permitted anywhere in the casino is guns, people are asked to check them at the door when they come in. Linked to the casino is the main



office, with a heavy steel safe bolted to the floor. The combination is the date of Captain Johns' first poker game, the one that got him started on the path to the Floating Palace. The office is usually inhabited either by Captain Johns, or by one of the more trusted members of his staff.



Captain Johns

Grit	2
Fast	3
Sharp	5/3/1
Patter	4

Appearance

Captain Johns is a slightly portly man, with pale, feminine hands that have quite evidently never seen a day's stroke of actual work. His fingers move with skill and speed, and his voice is constantly at work, talking to people, chatting to them, delving into their personalities. He has a perfect poker face, and over years of play has not only rid himself of tells but can neatly fake them. He is an expert card sharp.

Equipment

- ☞ Pack of cards
- ☞ Set of poker dice
- ☞ Set of dice
- ☞ Large number of poker chips, high denomination
- ☞ Long-barrel .45 Colt, the only gun allowed in the club

Experience worth 1 (combat) or 3 (gambling)

2.2.6.2 Dervish's

Dervish's is another saloon and casino in Eagleton, though somewhat less reputable. Drinks are again free for anyone playing with reasonable stakes at the tables, as is food if a player shows that they have a certain number of chips. Guns are not taken away at the door, fights are common, and gunshots are not unknown. The management tend to keep these fairly quiet, not difficult considering the neighbourhood where Dervish's sits. The managers and owners never appear on the casino floor, preferring their own quiet office. In fact the owner is Captain Johns, although very few people know this, and even fewer will admit it. The Captain has quite a grip on the underworld of the town, mainly run through Dervish's and the Dead End Saloon next door.

2.2.6.3 The Dead End Saloon

The Dead End Saloon is another of Captain Johns' businesses, if anything even less reputable than its neighbour, Dervish's. As with Dervish's very few people know of Captain Johns' involvement.

The Dead End Saloon provides cheap, strong drinks, and cabaret. Saloon girls wander the floor, looking for marks who will pay them for a good time. If you have a vice then the Dead End Saloon is the place to go in order to indulge it, so long as you have the money. The ground floor is a wide open space with a single round stage in the middle. The stage is where the cabaret sing and dance for the entertainment of the crowd, while the saloon girls take drink orders across the floor, making the most of their opportunity to talk to people and try and drum up business. The upper floors are shabby, run down rooms, little more than bunks and washbasins. Each of the girls from the saloon lives in one of these rooms, their personal belongings locked away in large chests during the day. These are also where they will usually go to conduct their business.

2.2.7 Deadman's Tree

A lonely tree somewhere in the desert, a single noose hanging from one of its branches. This has been the site of numerous lynchings, whether just or unjust. The area seems to carry an aura of death and despair about it, sun will seem unpleasantly sterile and bright, clouds will seem close and oppressive. The tree could be used in several ways, either as a random encounter where the characters happen to ride in on a lynching in progress, or as the victim being led to the tree, or even as the group leading someone to the tree for some mob justice.

2.2.7.1 Lynch Mob Member

Grit	2
Fast	2
Sharp	2
Patter	2

Equipment

- ☞* Long-barrelled rifle or revolver
- ☞* Rope
- ☞* Horse
- ☞* Victim

Appearance

Fairly average person, with a light of hatred and vengeance in their eyes. As always with part of a mob, the intelligence of the mob as a whole is equal to its most stupid member divided by the number of people.

Experience worth 0 (3 members give 1 point)

3 The rules

Usually Ye Olde West is played using five poker dice, preferably per player but communal is fine so long as you do not mind sharing. The rules are fairly simple, you have a number of points allocated to each statistic to a maximum of fifteen, however these are split into three levels of five and written as shown: 5/3/2 for example. This means that the player rolling that statistic gets to roll five dice, then choose up to three from those five to reroll, then choose another two after that to reroll again. From these you are trying to construct the best hand you can:

Five aces (allows you to buy a joker in that statistic if you do not have one already and have the experience to do so, otherwise allows you to transfer the joker to that statistic between games, also gives you an experience point)

Five of a kind, all the same face showing, if they are all aces see above

Four of a kind, e.g. JJJJ

Royal straight, must be AKQJT

Straight, can only be KQJT9

Full house, e.g. JJJQQ

Three of a kind, e.g. QQQ

Two pair, e.g. TT99

Small straight, e.g. AKQ or QJT

Pair, e.g. KK

High card, anything but T or 9.

A = Ace

K = King

Q = Queen

J = Jack

T = Ten

9 = Nine

Jokers cost experience points to buy, and are effectively a wild card. No character may ever have more than one at a time, and no one ever than a character may ever have a joker. Jokers work as follows. Supposing Naughty Nelly rolls AAQKT, at the moment her hand is just a small straight (AKQ, discarding the spare ace and the ten). With a joker she can replace one dice with a result of her choice, so above she might replace an ace with a jack, and suddenly she's got a straight. Remember that you may only have one joker at a time, and it must be applied to a single statistic.

The value of the cards themselves goes as follows: AKQJT9. In the event of two people rolling exactly the same hand (remember that if two people have AAAA but one has a king and the other a queen as their fifth card the one with the higher spare card wins) they should roll a single dice each for highest card.

All checks, combats and competitions in this game run the same way. In the even of checks the Sheriff (or GM, or MT, or BMD, or ST, and so on, you get the idea) will allocate a hand for you to beat (for example jumping from a fourth

storey balcony might require a small straight or better on a Grit roll in order to walk away). While there is no actual mechanic for injury you should use common sense. Jumping through a window will give you cuts and bruises, which you can quite happily ignore. Jumping off a cliff is going to kill you, whether you are a character or not.

The character or extra with the highest Fast will always attack first, if two have the same then you should dice off for highest card on one dice each. The attacker declares their action (I'm going to pick up one of the bar stools and smash it over his head), and the defender declares their response (I'm going to dive under the table, trying to dodge the swinging stool). The Sheriff chooses which stat each should roll as appropriate (in the above example Grit for the attacker, and Fast for the defender) and they should roll as described above.

The person with the highest result succeeds. If the attacker wins, then the encounter is over (optional rule: you can take a number of hits of any sort equal to your first level of Grit before being knocked down, so no more than five, this prevents both characters and extras from being killed or knocked out quite as easily, this is not damage, as you recover it each time you enter or leave an area so long as you have a few minutes to rest, just a way to keep things more reasonable). If the defender wins, they now get a chance to attack.

This mechanic does not only apply to combat, but also to any other situation where a character is pitted against someone else. For example, Jake is trying to palm a card into his hand from the deck. He can choose to try and do it with sleight of hand (Sharp) or by distracting the two others at the table with idle chatter (Patter). Since the two are not co-operating they do not get any teamwork benefit, and each must roll against Jake separately. In this case Fast does not apply, since there is no attacker. The other two at the table will spot the attempt however if their roll with their equivalent statistic (Sharp if Jake tries sleight of hand, Patter if he tries to distract them).

If Jake were to roll three of a kind, Nelly roll four of a kind, and poor Ned roll only a high card then Nelly would spot the switch, but Ned would have no clue. If however they had spotted Jake, and were now paying careful attention to what he was doing and working as a team, then they would take the highest relevant statistic that either of them own (Nelly, with a Sharp of 4/2 rather than Ned with a Sharp of 1) and add one dice to it for each extra person helping. Note that this dice will be added to the lowest level below five each time, and this is the only time when someone may gain (temporarily) a fourth level in a statistic.

Finally there is one other way to try and increase your chance of winning, but at great risk. You can gamble dice. When you gamble a dice you are risking losing it for good in exchange being allowed to reroll it (i.e. an extra dice of the next level up). If you fail, the dice is gone for good and the results will be disastrous for you. If you succeed though you gain an experience point for being a risk taker. One other thing, if you are risking your last dice in a statistic and fail, the result will be absolutely catastrophic for you, possibly killing your character, you will lose half your experience, and you will have 0 in that

statistic, instantly failing any challenges against it. Gambling can only be used once per session, and only when there is no other way that you could beat the hand. You do not need to declare that you are gambling before you roll, but you may not make any rerolls of the dice you are using after declaring that you are gambling. Only players may gamble, extras are forbidden from gambling.

Some examples of play follow:

Snakeboot Joe and his posse have just ridden into town, well known as wanted men they have been confronted by the local lawmen. The Sheriff offers to let them live if they drop their weapons and come quietly. Irrked by this Snakeboot decides to draw and fire his weapon.

As a surprise action Snakeboot gets to attack first, regardless of his or the lawman's speed. His Fast is 4/1, and his first roll gives him AJJT, better than nothing, but not what he was hoping for. He uses his single reroll to reroll the ten, reasoning that if the lawman also rolls two jacks the ace backup will help him tip the balance. His reroll gives him a queen, leaving him with a hand of two jacks backed by an ace and a queen.

The lawman himself has a Fast of 5, with no rerolls. He is relying on his single roll of five dice beating Snakeboot's. He rolls, and gains KKJJ9. Snakeboot's shot would go wild, but Snakeboot is going to take a risk. Knowing that if he does not succeed he is going to die, or worse be jailed, he decides to gamble one of his dice. This allows him to roll it again. He gets lucky and rolls a J, giving him three of a kind and comfortably beating the lawman's hand. Not only does he not suffer for his risk this time, but he gains an experience point. However he has used up his gamble for the game.

The bullet strikes home, burying itself into the chest of the lawman, who keels over forwards, dead by the time he hits the floor. The rest of the lawmen look on in horror, and a little awe, and decide that perhaps simply letting the gang go about their business might be the simplest method. With downcast, shamed eyes they gather their fallen leader, and make their way back to the sheriff's office.

Later in the saloon Snakeboot is playing a game of poker with a couple of the saloon girls and a gentleman. He suspects that the gentleman is cheating, and accuses him of having an ace up his sleeve. The gentleman looks stunned, and denies it, but says that after this accusation he will leave the game. Snakeboot decides not to allow this and reaches out to force the gentleman back into his chair.

Since this is not a combat situation there is no need to determine who gets to attack first. Snakeboot rolls his Grit of 4/1 to try and get the man to stay in his chair, while the gentleman decides he will try and dodge out of the way rather than by trying to escape by force. This means that he will be rolling his speed of 4/2.

Snakeboot's first roll gives him KKQ9, and a reroll of the nine gives him a J. This lets him build a small straight, improving on his earlier pair. Meanwhile the gentleman has rolled AAAT and neatly slipped away from Snakeboot's outstretched arm, gathering his winnings from the table as he does so and not bothering to use his reroll on the ten since the Sheriff knows that Snakeboot cannot beat his result.

Snakeboot decides not to let the situation lie there, rising and threatening the gentleman again. This time the gentleman responds less subtly, not turning round but brushing back his jacket to reveal an old but polished revolver at his hip. With a cry of 'turn and face me old man' Snakeboot starts to draw his gun. Now we have entered combat.

The gentleman has a Fast of 4/2 and so will act first, able to draw his gun, turn and fire off a shot before Snakeboot can finish drawing his own gun. He rolls against his Fast again, this time getting 99TQ, using his two-dice reroll on the ten and queen he gets a pair of tens, so his hand reads 99TT.

Snakeboot meanwhile rolls his own Fast, getting KKTT on his first roll. Since his opponent acted first, Snakeboot knows he does not have to reroll this. Now it is Snakeboot's turn to shoot. He rolls his own Fast again getting AAAT. His reroll lets him roll the ten again for a Q. The gentleman's chances are looking slim, and he rolls his own Fast to get AAKT, and using his rerolls to get an AQ, meaning that their hands are perfectly matched. Each of them takes a dice and rolls, highest score succeeds. Snakeboot rolls a J, while the gentleman rolls a Q. The bullet misses, burying itself in a nearby post while the two men stand facing each other, guns outstretched.

The gentleman is trying to talk Snakeboot down, talking calmly and softly. The Sheriff asks Snakeboot to make a Grit (4/1) roll against the gentleman's Patter of 5 in order to maintain his anger. Snakeboot rolls a AJJT, rerolling the ten for another ten. The gentleman rolls AKQQJ, beating Snakeboot's grit and cooling him off a little. After a few minutes of fully roleplayed talking the gentleman's action has taken full effect, and Snakeboot has allowed him to go on his way unmolested.

Later that night Snakeboot takes a couple of his posse to the room of the gentleman, hoping to force the door and reclaim what he sees as rightfully his. The Sheriff has already decided that the door's Grit hand is AAA, since it is a fairly solid door. Snakeboot and his two friends get to work. Snakeboot is the strongest of the group, and the help of his two friends pushing with him raises his stat by two dice (from 4/1 to 5/2). The first roll gives them JJJ9K, and rerolling the two dice they are allowed gives them another pair of 9's for a full house. With a crashing splintering sound the door gives way, and they are treated to the sight of the gentleman in the bath with Beth, Snakeboot's favourite saloon girl.

3.1 Crossing into other Dreamscapes

However it may be done, the characters may at some point cross into another Dreamscape, such as the Land of the Fey (Arcadia), or Fairytale Land (also known as the Grimm Land), or perhaps even a new, barely formed land. Regardless, the basic rules for handling this are simple. Whenever a legend is outside their own Dreamscape they are treated as an extra, thus they can be killed as easily as an extra, and are no stronger (reduce each dice level by one dice to represent this).

Remember also that the new Dreamscape will be completely alien to them. In some their guns may refuse to work, since that world simply doesn't accept guns. They will never lose their guns however, nor will their clothing change. Effectively they are carrying a piece of their setting with them wherever they go, but not enough to affect the new Dreamscape.

They will also be unable to bring anything back from the new Dreamscape, anything that they try to bring back will simply vanish as they cross through, unless carried by a native of that Dreamscape. Note also that equipment alien to a Dreamscape can only be used by those who actually carried it in or others from their home, for anyone else it will not work.

Anyone in the new Dreamscape will instantly recognise the characters as being alien and different, although their reactions depend on the person. The same applies if any characters from other Dreamscapes cross through.

How to cross into other Dreamscapes though is a different matter, bear in mind that no matter what it should not be easy, and should almost always take a price from any legends using it.

3.1.1 Examples of other Dreamscapes

Arcadia – the traditional home of Titania, Queen of the fairies, and all her minions.

Fantasy – Elves, Dwarves, Trolls, Orcs, Goblins, all of these are here, as are many other mythical and fantasy creatures, both serious and comical, their guns will not work here

Grimm Land – a land built off the fairytales of the Brothers Grimm, dark and forbidding, with wicked witches and strange creatures

The New Frontier – possibly the closest parallel to the west, despite its strangeness, a Dreamscape based in space, with exploration and exploitation being the main order of the day, the legends should feel right at home here and will not suffer the usual penalty

The Mythos – the world of Lovecraft and other forms of eldritch horror, not a nice place to visit, in recent times it has also been infected by several serial killers and characters from such-called 'slasher' films

The East – a world of martial arts and cinematic hand to hand fights, guns do not work here in the same way, since many native legends can dodge bullets

3.1.2 The Frontiers

One way to work in crossovers with other genres is the Frontiers, these are areas where the West borders other dreamscapes and a little 'leakage' occurs. In these areas the laws of nature may well be slightly different, allowing a little more leeway in what can and cannot be. Some examples of these Frontiers and the creatures that may come from them are below.


It is worth remembering that while these may be called borders or frontiers the word doesn't quite fit, since there is no physical edge to the West, despite what may seem to be at an one time. There is also no guarantee that legends returning to a border they have visited before will find it again.

3.1.2.1 Border with Death

The dead do not necessarily stay dead near the frontier with the dead, this is where the human subconscious locks away its zombies, vampires, ghosts, and anything else dead. However they may be killed is up to the Sheriff, although a sample zombie is below.

Grit	5/5
Fast	1
Sharp	1
Patter	0

Equipment

 Rags

Appearance

Rotten, grey skin hangs off its lank figure. The stench of decay is near-unbearable. At some patches of its flesh bone shows clearly through the missing skin and flesh.

Special

Will not die, except through fire in which case it burns to ashes, or being reduced to a fine red mist. In other words it will keep on coming no matter what, although without a head it will have some difficulty in moving in the right direction.

3.1.2.2 Border with the East

One of the few places where people can actually take on guns while unarmed. Here kung-fu monks can dodge bullets, glide through the air, or run up walls. Every martial arts film you have ever seen is represented in the East, and this bleeds across to the West at the border. Some people will be able to dodge bullets, and manage spectacular feats, although nothing overtly magical.

3.2 Optional extra rules

3.2.1 'Grit point' damage

Following this rule a legend or extra may take as many hits as they have grit score up to five, this ignores the type of damage, whether a punch, knife, or gun. This allows for longer fight sequences, and can also be applied to only specific types of damage, for example only to non-gun damage.

3.2.2 Keep Standing

Anyone who's seen a Western will know that the hero can take just about any type of damage without falling over, so long as they need to. One way to simulate this is to make a Grit test whenever the legend would normally fall over. If they pass, then they can continue as normal, and will collapse at the end of the contest.

3.2.3 Noon Duel rules

Instead of simply basing a duel on the best Fast hand another way to do it is to use one of the mechanics above, and then continue. If you do this then they can use either Fast to make a normal shot, or Sharp to make a called shot to, for example, their gun or hat. Sharp cannot be used on the draw.

3.2.4 The Desperado Clause

In a gunfight involving a small number of legends and a large group of others, to simplify things you can treat groups of the others as single teams. Technically this is a situation where legends cannot work together, but its well known that a legendary gunfighter can blow away hundreds of extras without an injury. The extras get a single dice roll per group, with the appropriate statistic, and one dice for each other member of the group.

4 Making a Cowboy/girl or Indian

1. Come up with a name for your character, anything will do. If you really can not think of one then there are tables in 3.1 to roll up a name, but coming up with your own is better.
2. Decide on the type of character you want to play, the moment you stepped through to the world of Ye Olde West your character's memory changed. As far as you know you have always been here, and always will be, unless you die.
3. Spend your points on statistics as you wish, you have 12 points to spend. These points can be spent only on first level dice, any other dice must be bought with experience.
4. Finally equip yourself however you wish, bear in mind though that a rifle does no more damage than a pistol, and declaring that you are wearing inch thick plate mail will make no difference. This is cinematic, the look of the thing is what matters, choose your characters equipment as you think suits the character. Any amount of money is permitted, so long as you could reasonably carry it. However carrying sacks full of dollar bills around is only going to get your robbed.

4.1 Names

4.1.1 Cowboy names

Poker dice roll	First part of name	Second part of name	
		Male	Female
AA	Buffalo	Ned	Jane
AK	Coyote	Jed	Jenny
AQ	Prairie	Joe	Dot
AJ	Desperate	James	Joan
AT	Mad	Jessie	Sue
A9	Wild	Carl	Meg
KK	Lucky	Luke	Anne
KQ	Two-shoes	Michael	Jen
KJ	Deadeye	Brian	Red
KT	Eagle-eye	Robert	Rose
K9	Beaky	Josh	Blue
QQ	Cactus	Alex	Astra
QJ	Horse-foot	Roger	Robin
QT	Bad	Ben	Lisa
Q9	Rocky	Daniel	Liz
JJ	Four-fingered	Martin	Caroline
JT	Shooter	Bob	Robin
J9	Ranger	Dan	Carol
TT	Mister	Charlie	Martha
T9	Dangerous	Kurt	Bet
99	Calamity	Mike	Betty

4.1.2 Indian names

Poker dice roll	First part of name	With/Of/At/To/On /For as appropriate	End of name
AA	Runs		Buffaloes
AK	Talks		Bears
AQ	Hunts		Snakes
AJ	Hides		Dogs
AT	Eats		Horses
A9	Sleeps		Birds
KK	Chases		Rivers
KQ	Looks		Squirrels
KJ	Speaks		Streams
KT	Toys		Guns
K9	Afraid		Bull
QQ	Kills		Wolves
QJ	Dances		Fish
QT	Medicine		Rats
Q9	King		Crows
JJ	Looks		Clouds
JT	Searches		Stars
J9	Chooses		Futures
TT	Poisons		Wells
T9	Lies		Owls
99	Trades		Birds

4.2 Character type examples

A few examples of character types are listed below, these are just suggestions and by no means are intended to be a comprehensive list:

- ☞ Gunslinger – the traditional gunslinger of the west, fast with his guns and his words
- ☞ Gambler – the obligatory gambler, willing to risk everything on the drop of a dice, so long as its his dice they are using
- ☞ Brawler – lets his fists do the talking, saves time
- ☞ Drunken hero – failed something years ago and so drinks himself into oblivion every night, but when he is sober...
- ☞ Vengeful traveller – someone on a quest looking for the person who wounded them/killed their family/slaughtered their town, and so on
- ☞ Gentleman killer – a gentleman travelled from the more civilised lands to the East, his respectable attire hides more than his fair share of skill
- ☞ Indian warrior – an Indian warrior, separated from his tribe for whatever reason and sent out into the world
- ☞ Bandit – a ruthless thief and murderer, looking simply for the easiest way to make a quick dollar and live a life of luxury off the misery of others
- ☞ The Quiet Man – no one knows where he comes from, and he will not talk about it, the quiet man is the consummate professional, silent except where spoken to, and a killer without a conscience.

4.3 Statistics

Ye Olde West builds off four basic statistic, and gives you twelve points to spend among them. These first points can only be spent on first level dice, only experience can buy higher levels of dice. The statistics are:

Grit: Your essential toughness, strength, force of will, whatever keeps you going when by all rights you should be dead, Grit checks should be used for any attacks not involving a gun, and for any injury to stay conscious, it is also a general purpose strength and toughness.

Fast: Simply put your speed at things, drawing your gun, dodging out of the way, trying to chase down a fleeing horse. Fast gives you a large advantage in combat, and is also the stat used to check for using a gun, whether drawing for a quickdraw shoot, or in a shootout.

Sharp: How good you are with your hands, can you palm a card without anyone noticing, or make off with someone's money from their pocket? Sharp is used for any form of cheating involving sleight of hand, and is also a general measure of intelligence.

Patter: Your essential charisma, how engaging your conversation is, and whether you can engage people deeply enough in your inane chatter that they forget the wanted poster on the door outside. Patter is used for any sort of charisma checks.

4.3.1 Sample situations

Grit

- ~~///~~ Throwing a punch
- ~~///~~ Taking a punch
- ~~///~~ Kicking down a door
- ~~///~~ Cross-country running
- ~~///~~ Drinking contests
- ~~///~~ Arm-wrestling contests
- ~~///~~ Lifting something heavy

Sharp

- ~~///~~ Picking a lock
- ~~///~~ Rigging a deck
- ~~///~~ Palming a card
- ~~///~~ Picking a pocket
- ~~///~~ Spotting a cheat
- ~~///~~ Switching a drink
- ~~///~~ Trick shots

Fast

- ~~///~~ Pulling a gun
- ~~///~~ Jumping onto a horse
- ~~///~~ Aiming
- ~~///~~ Dodging a blow
- ~~///~~ Sprinting
- ~~///~~ Dodging a charging horse
- ~~///~~ Catching a thrown bottle

Patter

- ~~///~~ Outwitting a bandit
- ~~///~~ Confusing someone
- ~~///~~ Distracting someone
- ~~///~~ Seducing a saloon girl
- ~~///~~ Talking down an opponent
- ~~///~~ Making a challenge
- ~~///~~ Confidence tricks

4.3.2 What do the scores mean?

Grit

- 0** Weak and fragile, breaks bones by accident
- 1** Below average, weaker than most
- 2** Average, evenly matched with a nobody townsfolk
- 3** Above average, can throw a decent punch
- 4** Somewhat tough, can take a few hits
- 5** Exceptionally tough, bounces back easily
- 5/5** Stunningly tough, Clint Eastwood style
- 5/5/5** Getting close to invulnerable, almost impossible to ht

Fast

- 0** Just plain slow, can barely even run
- 1** Below average, cannot run or move with any real speed, poor aim
- 2** Average, can run and can aim a gun
- 3** Above average, can manage a quick draw fairly accurately
- 4** Somewhat fast, can draw and fire in one motion
- 5** Fast, getting to the point of being unbeatable
- 5/5** Damn fast, just a blur when drawing
- 5/5/5** Lightning fast, barely even a blur, the draw is no longer visible

Sharp

- 0** Just plain useless, just cannot do anything dextrous with their hands
- 1** Below average, cannot do the 'coin in the ear trick'
- 2** Average, can manage the coin in the ear trick to fool small children
- 3** Above average, can pick a pocket of a sleeping person without waking
- 4** Not bad, can pick a pocket or palm a card with relative ease
- 5** Sharp, can palm any card they choose and steal a gun belt
- 5/5** Professional sharp, can happily rig a deck for a good hand
- 5/5/5** Wizard, can rig a deck in any order they want

Patter

- 0** Mute
- 1** Quiet, or slightly unpleasant mannerisms
- 2** Average person
- 3** Somewhat charismatic
- 4** Natural born leader
- 5** Can talk someone into giving up their gun
- 5/5** Can talk someone into turning their gun on their mates
- 5/5/5** Can talk someone into turning their gun on themselves

Note that these abilities are purely as rough guidelines of what people can do. The actual difficulty is up to the Sheriff to choose, and generally a legend should simply be told that they succeed or fail, unless another party is involved. If another party is involved then nothing is guaranteed, although with higher abilities you can naturally attempt trickier manoeuvres and generally have a better chance of success.

5 Advancing

Advancing in YOW is simple enough. Every session you attend you will gain one automatic experience points, the Sheriff may also award up to three more per person for good role-playing, helping with the enjoyment of the game, or solving a particularly intractable puzzle. Finally you can get an experience point if you gamble successfully or roll five aces.

Experience point costs are as follows:

Level one dice – 4 points

Level two dice – 8 points

Level three dice – 12 points

Joker – 20 points, or 4 points to move from one statistic to another, you must have rolled five aces at some point in a stat in order to buy your joker in it.

Characters with a Joker in one of their stats are known as the following:

Brute - Grit

Sharp shooter - Fast

Card sharp - Sharp

Con man - Patter

6 Character Sheet

Name											
Concept											
Grit	/	/	Fast	/	/	Sharp	/	/	Patter	/	/
Appearance											
Equipment											
Experience											
Notes											

7 Glossary

Boot knife – a knife in the boot, quite short-bladed and usually sharp, more a utility knife than anything else

Brute – a legend with a Joker in their Grit statistic

Card sharp – a legend with a Joker in their Sharp statistic

Cheat – one of the worst insults you can give to a card-playing person, and one of the best ways to get a shootout or duel

Colt – one of the best known brands of gun available

Con man – a legend with a Joker in their Patter statistic

Derringer – a small gun with at most one or two bullets, often used as a hold-out gun

Duel – two men facing each other for a quick-draw, often at high noon

Horse thief – someone who steals horses, always punished with hanging

Legend – a character, or the particular archetype from humanities subconscious that that character represents

Long-barrel – a rifle or pistol with a long barrel, in general much more accurate than a normal pistol or rifle, though it makes no difference to statistics

Lynching – a mob hanging of a criminal, or just a victim

Rustler – a particular criminal who specialises in stealing cattle or other livestock, usually punished by lynching

Sharpshooter – a legend with a Joker in their Fast statistic

Sheriff – either the person running the game, or an individual lawman

Shoot-out – lots of people facing off and firing guns at each other